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ABSTRACT

This report determined the results of the implementation of flexible instructional organization (F10) or staff differentiation at Venice Junior High School, Sarasota, Florida. The introductory portion concerns the report purpose, procedures and scope as well as background material. Results of interviews, conferences, surveys, observations, and meetings were divided into categories and tabulated. The analysis of data indicated three major problems: the lack of goals, objectives and direction; departmental specialization and isolation; and the lack of adequate funding. Recommendations for solutions to these problems are given. (MJM)

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SARASOTA COUNTY SCHOOLS
Sarasota, Florida

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A REPORT TO THE SUPERINTENDENT REGARDING THE PROGRESS OF VENICE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL TOWARDS FLEXIBLE INSTRUCTIONAL ORGANIZATION (FIO), OR STAFF DIFFERENTIATION

by

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SP 005 950

Gene M. Pillot
Superintendent

March, 1972

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Purpose of the Report

It was the purpose of the report to determine what had been accomplished, what problems currently existed, and what future events should be considered as a result of the implementation of flexible instructional organization (FIO) or staff differentiation at Venice Junior High School. The period of investigation for the report was from February 7, 1972 to March 14, 1972.

General Procedures and Methodology of the Report

The procedures and methodology of the report had been utilized on at least three previous occasions by the investigator.[1,2,3] The basic components of the report consisted of the following:

(1) On site interviews with all faculty, staff and selected students. The respective dates were February 7, 9, 11, 14, 16, 18, 21, 23, and 28. The interviews were semistructured.

(2) Site observation of the entire facility on several days.

(3) Feedback and review sessions with the entire faculty and staff (February 23 and March 1 with a special meeting of teacher aides only on March 3).

(4) Interviews with parents (included one evening session with parents at Venice High School on February 23 and several parent conferences on February 28).[4]

(5) A conference with the editor of the local newspaper in Venice and one of his reporters.[5]

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[1]Fenwick English, "A Report Regarding the State of Accomplishment and Readiness for Further Staff Differentiation in the Williamsville Central School District," Williamsville, New York, February 1970, 38 pp.

[2]Chairman of USOE Visitation Team in Kansas City, Missouri to evaluate two inner-city DS sites, 1971.

[3]A technique known as "organizational slice" was used in Mesa, Arizona in the Spring of 1971 at Fremont Junior High School.

[4]The meeting with parents was the second one called in a series of meetings held with the Venice administration. See, "Parents Stay Informed," The Gondolier, February 17, 1972.

[5]The conference was followed by an article in The Gondolier entitled, "School Board Tackles Staffing," of March 2, 1972.

(6) Departmental meetings at Venice Junior High School (math, English and music) over the same dates; (and in addition March 7 and March 13).

(7) Extensive and intensive interviews with the administrative team at Venice Junior High School over the investigative period. This also included interviews with the high school administrator, and the administrator at Venice Elementary School.

(8) Staff surveys and student surveys constructed from on-site data gathered from the interviews.

(9) Meetings with the Sarasota County Flexible Instructional Organizational Steering Committee on February 25 to assess system wide implications of staff differentiation.

(10) One session with the Sarasota County Teachers Association Representative Council in which preliminary Venice data was distributed (March 2, 1972) and specific questions answered about the program.

Scope of the Report

The investigator was no stranger to the Sarasota project. He consulted with the County on three occasions beginning in the Summer of 1969 prior to becoming an employee of the County in January of 1972. Furthermore, the investigator served on the validation panel of national experts in the development of the total Sarasota County system (FIO) model.

This report therefore was not an investigation of the efficacy of the concept of flexible instructional organization (FIO), nor of the system model. Rather, it was an analysis of the implementation of that model at the site previously identified, i.e., Venice Junior High School. To the extent that the field implementation challenged basic assumptions of the system model, the investigator felt compelled to recommend review where necessary.

The report was not entirely balanced. The weight was decidely negative, since the aim of the report was to uncover problems which had surfaced during the implementation period (1969-72). While the report did present positive changes, it was not the function of the report to be laudatory, but to uncover problems and weaknesses so that they could be constructively changed to improve the program.

Finally, staff differentiation did not occur in a vacuum. To the extent that it was enmeshed in a total school program, the total school program was often impossible to separate from it. Some of the problems would have occurred regardless of whether or not staff differentiation had been implemented there. To some extent the problems uncovered at Venice Junior High School are typical of secondary schools in general. For this reason, the investigator did not separate those facets of the program which needed to be improved which were entirely due to efforts at altering the staffing pattern. Recommendations were made which in some cases clearly went beyond the program in flexible instructional organization.

History and Background

The Sarasota County staff differentiation thrust was unique nationally. It was the only project of its kind which was the product of a doctoral dissertation and authoritative analysis and validation prior to implementation. [6]

The development of a County wide model followed a series of preliminary events beginning in May of 1968. [7] These included reports to the School Board of Sarasota County, the formation of various study groups and committees, site visitations to Temple City, California and Kansas City, Missouri (two earlier national models), and the solicitation of interested schools in pilot efforts in the County. During the 1969-70 school year, initial probes in differentiated staffing were begun in the departments of science at Venice Junior High School and Language Arts in Sarasota Junior High School. In September of 1970 full implementation of the system model was begun at Venice Junior High School and continued on a departmental basis in Language Arts at Sarasota Junior High School.

Venice Junior High School

Venice Junior High School was constructed in 1958 on a location which was formerly the Venice Municipal Airport. It is adjacent to Venice High School and Venice Elementary School. Approximately 846 students in grades 7, 8 and 9 are currently housed in the present facility. [8]

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[6]Gene M. Pillot, "A System Model of Differentiated Staffing," Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Department of Educational Administration, University of Florida, 1970.

[7]For a detailed review of these events see Gene M. Pillot, "Mid-Year Evaluation Report of Differentiated Staffing Pilot Programs," Sarasota County Schools, 1971, 72 pp. (Xeroxed)

[8]Historical data extrapolated from Max S. Skidmore, "An Empirical Evaluation of a School System Model of Differentiated Staffing," Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Department of Educational Administration, University of Florida, 1971, p. 35.

Past Evaluation Efforts

Past evaluation efforts at Venice Junior High School consisted principally of four outside evaluations by individuals, two outside evaluations by teams, and two inside evaluations by local County personnel.

The outside evaluators were Dr. Max Skidmore, Dr. Anthony Gregorc, Assistant Professor, University of Illinois, Dr. Robert Frossard, Associate Professor of Educational Administration of the University of Florida, Dr. Ted Hipple, Associate Professor of English at the University of Florida, Dr. Rick Nations, Director of Testing and Evaluation of Sarasota County and Mr. Floyd Davis, Director of the County FIO project. The teams were the Florida State University Evaluation Team, and a group of visiting DS Project Directors sponsored by the United States Office of Education.

The major comments which were transmitted to the County via letters and reports and which were reported in the "Mid Year and Final Reports" for 1970-71 are summarized in Table I. Past evaluations did include staff interviews, student interviews (Skidmore) and staff morale testing (Nations). Perhaps the most critical of these reports was filed by the Florida State University intersite School Personnel Utilization evaluation team. [9]

The FSU criteria were developed for national utilization in the rating of the Florida network projects and those in Temple City, California, and Mesa, Arizona. It is interesting to note that Sarasota was ranked below average on all of the criteria but one. FSU ratings were derived by having two independent observers examine written documents and reports from the various projects. The relative paucity of material from Sarasota and the apparent hodge-podge manner it was put together may have detracted unduly in this regard. Nonetheless, it is important to look at the results of that rating by the FSU-SPU team in Table II.

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[9]For a review of the procedures see pp. 58-63, "An Evaluation Paradigm for Flexible Staffing Patterns and Its Application to the Temple City, Mesa, and Florida Network Projects," Volume IV. The Evaluation Training Center, Department of Educational Research, Florida State University, Tallahassee, Florida 1972. (Offset)

Table I - A Summary of Problems Identified by Past Evaluators of Venice Junior High School

PROBLEMS IDENTIFIED	PAST EVALUATORS*						
	SKIDMORE	GREGORC	FROSSARD	HIPPLE	NATIONS	FSU TEAM	DAVIS
1. Departmental isolation, lack of communication;	x					x	x
2. Lack of role differentiation, clear job specifications;	x		x			x	x
3. Lack of adequate resources; financial and material;	x		x			x	x
4. Questioning of staff allocation formula or cost assumptions; cutbacks;	x	x		x			
5. Lack of staff involvement in all planning stages;	x						
6. Need for human relations, group dynamics training;		x	x			x	x
7. Role model of principal unrealistic;		x					
8. Need for staff in-service training;		x	x			x	x
9. Morale problems;					x		
10. Lack of teacher commitment;				x			
11. Possible articulation problems with high school;				x			
12. Increased teaching load;	x					x	
13. Lack of diffused decision making;						x	
14. Lack of proper facilities;						x	

* does not include the USOE team since no problems were identified.

Table II - A Review of Sarasota-Venice On 27 FSU Criteria Compared to Mesa, Arizona and Temple City, California

	Mesa	Temple City	Sarasota
The degree to which the model provides for:			
1. Needs of the individual:			
a. self-fulfillment	16	16	8
b. self-expression	16	15	8
c. freedom of choice	15	15	12
d. job satisfaction	15	15	0*
2. Interpersonal relations:			
a. interaction of personnel	16	15	14
b. skill in interpersonal relations	17	16	5
c. supportive behavior	18	14	13
3. Commitment of the professional:			
a. to the student	18	15	14
b. to expertise	18	19	14
c. to public trust	15	14	14
d. to the profession	15	15	13
4. Workflow structures:			
a. motivation of personnel	15	15	11
b. means of influence on behavior of personnel	15	15	13
c. authority	15	15	13
d. leadership	16	15	9
e. decision-making level	17	16	13
f. decision-making skills	16	19	7
g. decision-making responsibility	17	17	13
h. direction of info flow	15	9	8
i. amount of information	13	0	9
j. resource allocation	17	17	18**

* means that information was not in data examined concerning this variable.

** the only criterion where Sarasota was above the mean of all projects.

Table II - (Continued) A Review of Sarasota-Venice On 27 FSU Criteria Compared to Mesa, Arizona and Temple City, California

	Mesa	Temple City	Sarasota
5. Perpetuation structures:			
a. recruitment of personnel	16	18	13
b. selection of personnel	16	16	16
c. credentialing of personnel	17	15	5
d. inservice training, purpose	16	20	14
e. inservice training, duration	16	18	8
f. inservice training, method	17	18	0
g. division of labor, staffing	20	19	19
h. remuneration	20	19	15
i. promotion	19	18	16
6. Evaluation:			
a. of instructional program	18	17	13
b. of personnel	16	17	11
c. student achievement	17	20	11
d. affective outcomes	18	17	16
7. Self-renewal:			
a. review system	16	15	11
b. evaluation of system	16	16	0
8. Accountability:			
a. cost/benefit analysis	16	16	0
b. problems survey	19	19	0

It is important to note that many of the same problems confronting the Venice program presently were identified early in the history of the project. These were:

(1) departmental isolation;
(2) lack of clear job/role differentiation;
(3) lack of adequate resources;
(4) need for human relations;
(5) need for staff in-service;

It is remarkable that these issues are still so strongly entrenched today at Venice Junior High School. There appears to have been little actual follow-up from the County Office in this regard, though there

were some aide training programs initiated. Forty-three percent (43%) of the professional staff indicated that they felt a lack of County Office leadership in FIO. Furthermore, sixty percent (60%) of the professional staff indicated that they lacked specific instructional objectives for FIO at Venice, and the same percentage indicated that they lacked knowledge of FIO goals for the County. [10]

Central FIO Steering Committee

The investigator met with the Chairman of the Central FIO Steering Committee, Mrs. Lou Ann Palmer, and later on February 25 with the entire Committee. The Committee expressed confusion and frustration. It was generally agreed that the group had not been called often enough, attendance was a problem, there was confusion regarding the scope of the authority and the functions of the Committee. Furthermore, the Committee felt there had been poor articulation and communication between the County Office and the Committee, and they felt they had been used as a "rubber stamp."

It was agreed that the functions of the Committee were as follows:

(1) to screen and evaluate further FIO proposals;

(2) to determine if the quality of the program was endangered by expansion and to assess the necessity for possibility of expansion;

(3) to serve as an in-county clearing house on FIO in Sarasota County;

(4) to serve as a "safety-valve," a group to which any professional in the County may raise issues or complain about the FIO program;

The Committee considered the possibility of re-organization of itself in the future. It was generally conceded that there was a need for a central FIO Committee, and that the administration would, in the future, attempt to live by previous guidelines established for the group to function correctly.

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[10] Fenwick W. English, "A Preliminary Summary of Problem Frequency and Problem Severity As Rated by the Professional Staff (N=35) at Venice Junior High School," March, 1972, Sarasota County Schools. 9 pp. (Mimeographed)

Interviews with the Professional Staff

A total of sixty-four staff members were interviewed at Venice Junior High School over the time period previously specified. Of these, 35 members were teachers, counselors, or administrators. The interviews lasted from ten minutes to over an hour and a half. In general, the average interview was approximately 25 minutes.

Those interviewed were asked the following questions:

(1) What problems have been evident with DS here?
(2) Where is faculty morale at the present time?
(3) How do you think the staff here feels about DS?
(4) How do you feel about it?
(5) What positive changes have happened to affect student learning as a result of DS?
(6) What are the objectives of DS for this school?
(7) How were job descriptions derived?
(8) How were student needs considered in the model?
(9) Cite any changes in your own teaching behavior in the last two years. Which ones can you attribute to DS?
(10) What one word best describes DS in Sarasota County now?

Tabulation and Scoring

From the interviews 101 problems were drawn. These were then prepared into a check list for further staff response. The check list was administered to the Venice staff on February 23, 1972. Each staff member was asked to indicate anonymously whether he thought any of the 101 items were problems in his opinion and how severe they were. This response was also registered on a severity scale from 5 ("very severe") to 1 ("very slight") for each problem.

The preliminary results of the assessment for the professional staff are attached. The highest checked problems are indicated followed by a mean score for all responses to the problem ("the severity mean").

The severity mean scores were then ranked from high (4.71) to low (2.18). To read the table an example is provided.

31%	lack of program creativity	3.36	50

This means that 31% of the staff felt that the lack of program creativity was a problem, but that it was only the 50th most severe problem at the school. Read another way, the 50th most severe problem as perceived by 31% of the staff at Venice was the lack of program creativity.

Table III - A Summary of Problem Frequency and Problem Severity as Rated by the Professional Staff at Venice Junior High School

	% of Staff Indicating Problem	Problem	Severity Mean	Severity Rank
1.	86%	lack of enough teachers	4.06	17
2.	86%	lack of communication outside departments	4.33	7
3.	82%	students who can't read at grade level	3.65	35
4.	74%	laxity in student discipline	3.38	48
5.	68%	low faculty morale	3.41	46
6.	62%	lack of parental/school contacts	3.09	57
7.	60%	lack of specific instructional objectives for FIO at Venice	3.61	38
8.	60%	lack of knowledge about FIO goals for County	4.00	18
9.	57%	secretarial factionalism	3.80	28
10.	57%	general County cutbacks	4.35	6
11.	54%	personality conflicts	3.10	56
12.	54%	intra-departmental jealousies	3.36	50
13.	54%	excessive class loads	4.21	11
14.	54%	lack of facilities to conduct the program	4.00	18
15.	54%	unavailability of the school principal	3.73	32
16.	54%	teachers take advantage of aides	3.78	29
17.	51%	overwork and fatigue	3.50	43
18.	51%	lack of real differentiation in job roles	4.22	10
19.	51%	lack of real instructional individualization	4.00	18
20.	51%	lack of program articulation with elem/high school	3.72	33
21.	51%	supervising principal over-extended	4.27	8
22.	48%	administrative manipulation of the staff and program	3.58	39
23.	48%	too much student freedom	3.11	55
24.	48%	lack of consideration of real student needs in FIO	4.23	9

25.	48%	some kids not motivated	3.82	26
26.	48%	trading of teachers for aides	3.64	36
27.	48%	student rudeness and profanity	3.52	42
28.	45%	unclear job responsibilities	3.87	24
29.	43%	lack of adequate materials and supplies for instruction	3.20	53
30.	43%	lack of County Office leadership	3.93	19
31.	43%	lack of real advancement opportunities in the DS model	3.40	47
32.	40%	lack of general faculty meetings	2.78	61
33.	40%	scheduling rigidities	3.92	20
34.	40%	weak leadership from the principal	4.07	16
35.	40%	departmental laxity in carrying out discipline procedures	3.92	20
36.	37%	past procedure for selection of directing teachers	4.38	4
37.	37%	lack of budget control by the staff	4.07	16
38.	34%	community criticism	3.58	39
39.	34%	sense of isolation from County	2.91	58
40.	34%	lack of trust in the school	3.91	21
41.	34%	resource centers "dumping" grounds	3.75	31
42.	34%	pupil boredom	3.58	39
43.	31%	lack of grouping of students	2.18	66
44.	31%	incompetent teachers	2.81	59
45.	31%	fear of retaliation for speaking up to administration	3.90	22
46.	31%	lack of program creativity	3.36	50
47.	31%	study halls	3.81	27
48.	31%	lack of curriculum relevance to students	3.73	32
49.	28%	chronic staff complainers	3.20	53
50.	28%	"putting on a show for visitors"	3.80	28
51.	28%	some teachers "hog" the aides	3.20	53
52.	28%	unqualified directing teachers	3.70	34
53.	28%	lack of a school PTA	3.10	56
54.	28%	several "weak" departments	3.50	43
55.	28%	lack of confidence in the faculty board	4.10	15
56.	28%	autocratic administration	3.70	34
57.	28%	lack of administration follow-through	3.70	34
58.	28%	lack of adequate school security	2.80	60
59.	25%	lazy teachers or colleagues	2.55	64
60.	25%	faculty board a rubber stamp	4.22	10
61.	25%	faculty "tattlers"	4.33	7

62.	25%	lack of adequate financial pay for work performed	4.11	14
63.	25%	inadequate curriculum	3.64	36
64.	25%	some aides usurping role of professional teachers	3.64	36
65.	25%	excessive noise	3.22	52
66.	25%	not enough electives for kids	4.11	14
67.	25%	departmental competition for scarce resources	3.44	44
68.	25%	central office "squabbling"	3.77	30
69.	25%	some teachers too traditional	3.55	41
70.	22%	favoritism by the principal	4.50	2
71.	22%	"administrative spies"	3.12	54
72.	22%	working with slow students	2.62	63
73.	22%	lack of proper instructional equipment	4.12	13
74.	22%	too rapid changes	3.75	31
75.	22%	pressure of the program	3.37	49
76.	22%	administrative overload; school "is top heavy"	3.75	31
77.	22%	faculty apathy	3.37	49
78.	22%	the student "drug problem"	4.37	5
79.	22%	teachers aren't compatible in department	3.62	37
80.	20%	teachers take advantage of aides	3.42	45
81.	20%	administrative paperwork	3.28	51
82.	20%	loss of teacher identity	3.85	25
83.	20%	too many staff "climbers"	4.71	1
84.	20%	parental resistance to program	4.00	18
85.	20%	teacher indifference to students	3.57	40
86.	20%	lack of curriculum articulation with the resource center	3.88	23
87.	17%	no planning time	4.16	12
88.	17%	some staff paid overtime some not	4.33	7
89.	17%	loss of pupil individuality	4.00	18
90.	17%	some teachers caught up in personality assassination	4.00	18
91.	14%	program haan't made a difference	4.00	18
92.	14%	teacher hostility in other County schools	3.80	28
93.	14%	nepotism	4.40	3
94.	14%	lack of good "old-fashioned" teaching	3.80	28
95.	11%	loss of status and prestige	3.75	31
96.	11%	old faculty grudges	2.50	65
97.	8%	staff overspecialization	2.66	62
98.	5%	lack of study halls	3.50	43
99.	5%	too many movies shown to kids	2.50	65

The data shows that the problems most frequently checked by the majority of the staff were not necessarily the most severe in terms of all the problems which were ranked at the school. For example, of the first five problems most severe at Venice only one affected more than 22% of the staff (not more than six professional staff).

The Ten Most Severe Problems at Venice

Item	% of Staff	Severity Mean
1. too many staff "climbers"	20%	4.71
2. favoritism by the principal	22%	4.50
3. nepotism	14%	4.40
4. past procedure on selection of directing teachers	37%	4.38
5. the student "drug problem"	22%	4.37
6. general County cutbacks	57%	4.35
7. lack of communication outside departments	86%	4.33
8. supervising principal over-extended	51%	4.27
9. lack of consideration of real student needs in FIO	48%	4.23
10. lack of real differentiation in job roles	51%	4.22

For the majority of the staff, (51%) the problems which were most severe were problems #'s 6, 7, 8 and 10. The method used therefore separates the perceived severity of the problem according to the perceived frequency of the problem, and sheds some perspective on how widespread some problems may be.

Table IV - Professional Estimates as to the Percentage of Staff Who Fit Various Reaction Categories to Staff Differentiation at Venice Junior High School

Reaction Category	Frequency of Response	Number of Staff Members Estimating Response (%) by Quartiles			
		25%	50%	75%	100%
1. enthusiastic cooperation	33	16	8	6	3
2. acceptance	30	17	9	4	0
3. cooperation under pressure	24	24	0	0	0
4. passive resignation	23	21	1	1	0
5. indifference/apathy towards staff differentiation	24	20	4	0	0
6. loss of interest in job	16	16	1	0	0
7. verbal protestation and doing only what is absolutely required	18	16	1	0	0
8. slowing down on one's actual performance	11	11	0	0	0
9. personal withdrawal	15	14	1	0	0
10. deliberate sabotage of the program	12	12	0	0	0
11. unknown	5	4	1	0	0

Example: Category #2, 30 professionals responded. Seventeen teachers responses as to what % actually accepted the program fell in the 1-25% range or the first quartile. Nine teachers estimates of the % of fellow teachers acceptance of staff differentiation fell in the 26-50% range or the second quartile, Etc.

Paraprofessional Response

All of the paraprofessionals at Venice were administered the same inventory of problems with the professional staff. Their responses are shown in Table V.

Table V - A Summary of Problem Frequency and Problem Severity as Rated by the Paraprofessional Staff at Venice Junior High School (N=20)

	% of Staff Indicating Problem	Problem	Severity Mean	Severity Rank
1.	85%	student rudeness and profanity	3.41	19
2.	70%	unclear job responsibilities	3.29	22
3.	60%	too much student freedom	3.50	18
4.	55%	laxity in student discipline	4.09	7
5.	55%	students who can't read at grade level	4.09	7
6.	55%	low faculty morale	4.09	7
7.	55%	lack of adequate financial pay for work performed	4.09	7
8.	45%	lack of communication outside departments	4.22	5
9.	45%	some kids not motivated	3.56	17
10.	45%	weak leadership from the principal	3.11	25
11.	40%	lack of parental/school contacts	4.00	8
12.	40%	personality conflicts	3.38	21
13.	40%	intra-departmental jealousies	2.75	28
14.	40%	fear of retaliation for speaking up to administration	2.63	30
15.	40%	excessive noise	3.75	13
16.	40%	lack of enough teachers	4.25	4
17.	40%	departmental laxity in carrying out discipline procedures	4.00	8
18.	40%	central office squabbling	3.50	18
19.	40%	lack of knowledge about FIO in the County	3.50	18
20.	35%	favoritism by the principal	3.29	22
21.	35%	community criticism	3.29	22
22.	35%	the unavailability of the principal	2.43	33
23.	35%	several weak departments	3.87	10

24.	35%	the student "drug" problem	3.57	5
25.	35%	pupil boredom	3.14	24
26.	30%	secretarial factionalism	4.33	3
27.	30%	chronic staff complainers	3.67	14
28.	30%	lack of good old-fashioned "teaching"	3.17	23
29.	30%	lack of administrative follow-through	4.17	6
30.	30%	lack of adequate school security	4.33	3
31.	25%	teachers take advantage of aides	4.00	8
32.	25%	lack of real advancement opportunities in the DS model	3.60	15
33.	25%	"Putting on a show for visitors"	3.60	15
34.	25%	overwork and fatigue	3.80	12
35.	25%	lack of proper preparation and staff involvement to enter the program	4.00	8
36.	25%	study halls	3.80	12
37.	25%	lack of confidence in Faculty Board	3.40	20
38.	25%	lack of real instructional individualization	3.80	12
39.	25%	teacher indifference to kids	3.20	23
40.	25%	some teachers caught up in personality assassination	2.60	31
41.	25%	resource centers "dumping grounds"	3.80	12
42.	20%	lack of adequate materials and supplies for instruction	3.50	17
43.	20%	lack of general faculty meetings	3.50	18
44.	20%	administrative manipulation of the staff and program	4.00	8
45.	20%	lazy teachers or colleagues	2.75	28
46.	20%	"administrative spies"	2.75	28
47.	20%	lack of specific instructional objectives for FIO at Venice	2.75	28
48.	20%	past procedure for selection of Directing Teachers	4.00	8
49.	20%	working with slow students	3.50	17
50.	20%	lack of facilities to conduct the program	4.00	8
51.	20%	inadequate curriculum	3.00	27
52.	20%	lack of real differentiation in the job roles	4.50	2
53.	20%	sense of isolation from County	3.25	22
54.	20%	no planning time	4.25	4
55.	20%	lack of a school PTA	3.50	18

56.	20%	lack of proper instructional equipment	2.50	32
57.	20%	loss of teacher identity	4.25	4
58.	20%	not enough electives for kids	3.50	18
59.	20%	pressure of the program	3.50	18
60.	20%	departmental competition for scarce resources	3.50	18
61.	20%	administrative overload; school is top heavy	3.75	13
62.	20%	lack of program articulation with elem/high school	3.00	27
63.	20%	toc many movies shown to kids	4.00	8
64.	20%	faculty apathy	2.75	28
65.	20%	lack of training	2.25	35
66.	20%	supervising principal over-extended	3.50	18
67.	15%	lack of County Office leader-ship	3.67	14
68.	15%	incompetent teachers	2.33	34
69.	15%	Faculty Board a rubber stamp	2.67	29
70.	15%	lack of budget control by the staff	2.67	29
71.	15%	faculty "tattlers"	4.00	8
72.	15%	loss of status and prestige	3.00	27
73.	15%	some teachers "hog" the aides	1.67	37
74.	15%	unqualified Directing Teachers	4.00	8
75.	15%	some staff paid for overtime and some not	3.00	27
76.	15%	general County cutbacks	4.67	1
77.	15%	loss of pupil individuality	3.67	14
78.	15%	lack of trust in the school	3.67	14
79.	15%	lack of curriculum articulation with the resource center	4.00	8
80.	15%	teachers aren't compatible in the department	3.00	27
81.	10%	some aides usurping role of pro-fessional teachers	2.00	36
82.	10%	too many staff "climbers"	3.50	18
83.	10%	trading of teachers for aides	2.50	32
84.	10%	lack of curriculum relevance to students	3.00	27
85.	10%	autocratic administration	3.00	27

Problem Severity as Rated by Paraprofessionals

The ten most severe problems as rated by the paraprofessionals at Venice Junior High School are illustrated below.

The Ten Most Severe Problems At Venice As Determined By The Paraprofessional Staff

Item	% of Staff	Severity Mean
1. General County cutbacks	15%	4.67
2. The student "drug problem"	35%	3.57
3. Lack of real differentiation in the job roles	20%	4.50
4. Secretarial factionalism	30%	4.33
5. Lack of enough teachers	40%	4.25
6. Lack of administrative follow-through	30%	4.17
7. Laxity in student discipline	55%	4.09
8. Students who can't read at grade level	55%	4.09
9. Low faculty morale	55%	4.09
10. Lack of adequate financial pay for work performed	55%	4.09

Student Attitudes and Achievement

The investigator studied the past achievement of students at Venice Junior High School. He also interviewed nineteen students on a stratified sampling basis on February 21, 1972. From these interviews a student questionnaire was developed. All students

took the questionnaire on February 24, 1972. From an enrollment of 846 students, 792 questionnaires were processed at the County computer center. This was a 93% return. The results of the questionnaire are shown below:

My feelings about Venice Junior High School are that it is:

okay, nothing great	54%
mostly pleasant	20%
unpleasant some of the time	18%
unpleasant all of the time	5%
a fantastic school	3%

Most teachers at Venice Junior High School are:

somewhat concerned about kids and their problems	47%
not too interested in kids or their problems	31%
really concerned about kids and their problems	11%
are not interested at all in kids or their problems	7%
dislike being with kids	3%

Discipline at this school needs to be:

about the same as it is now	42%
less strict than it is now	29%
somewhat more strict than it is now	16%
much more strict than it is now	8%
absent in any form	5%

Which of the things below needs to be changed the most?

packet work in math	33%
the English program	25%
the science program	19%
resource centers	11%
the library	10%

Which of the subjects below is the most exciting to you?

physical education	48%
science	20%
math	11%
English	11%
social studies	10%

Which of the following problems below is the worst at this school right now?

smoking in the restrooms	43%
pupil boredom	36%
talking back to teachers	9%
pupil competition for grades	9%
lack of homework	4%

The teachers at Venice Junior High School should:

leave kids along to do their own work at their own pace	35%
push just some kids more than they do now	34%
push kids a little more than they do now	16%
push kids a lot more to learn than they do now	9%
not expect kids to do much of anything	4%

Student Achievement

There were no school wide or departmental objectives for flexible instructional organization specifically couched in terms of student achievement which were either measurable or assessable by the investigator. This problem will be discussed in the analyses and recommendations of this report.

Therefore, the investigator examined the State required ninth-grade junior high school tests. Developed by the Educational Testing Service (ETS) and administered through the Department of Educational Research at Florida State University, scores were obtained for the time period 1967-1971. The results of this comparison are shown in Table VI.

A cursory examination of this data indicates that almost all of the scores show a decline from 1967 to 1971, and that the trend was established before the FIO program was initiated at Venice Junior High School. Two areas of the test illustrate that the 1971 scores were reversed and were higher than the 1967 scores, i.e., the areas of quantative analysis and math computation.

Some special testing was done at Venice Junior High School. The STEP tests were administered once during the first week of October, 1970, and again in the last week of April, 1971. Some statistical analyses yielded small but significant gains. The gains, however, were disputed by Nations [11] in which he stated the following:

(1) The large number of students tested may have raised the significance level beyond its true meaning (an inflated significance can be caused statistically by increasing the population tested thereby showing a small gain);

(2) One section pertaining to science was not statistically significant;

(3) The STEP tests were not designed to measure changes in student achievement over a time period of less than a full calendar year;

(4) No national norm data are available for interpretation of the results of the testing;

(5) Tests were not administered to a comparable group of students at a non-FIO site who might do as well (a definite lack of experimental control or experimental design);

It is impossible to equate a cause and effect relationship between staff differentiation and any changes in student achievement given the present measurement devices and data. What testing has been done is almost totally lacking in good experimental design, and any types of control or information about the standardization or type of treatment employed. The worst that might be said is that FIO is accentuating a downward trend in achievement as measured by the ninth grade tests (assuming such tests are valid and that a cause and effect relationship could be established). On-the-other-hand, the best that might be said is not very optimistic. Based on the available data FIO does not appear to effect such achievement very much (such treatments are largely irrelevant). This problem will be discussed in more detail later in this report.

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[11] Letter by Dr. Rick Nations to Max Skidmore, May 7, 1971, 2 pp. Xerox as cited in the 1970-71 Year End Evaluation Reports on FIO, Sarasota County Schools, June, 1971.

Table VI - A Comparison of Mean Scores 1967-1971 of Ninth Grade Classes at Venice Junior High School on Florida State Wide Ninth-Grade Tests

AREA	YEARS									
	1967		1968		1969		1970		1971	
	RMS	S%	RMS	S%	RMS	S%	RMS	S%	RMS	S%
verbal	34.6	86.2	33.9	89.7	33.6	79.9	32.3	82.9	32.4	85.4
quantitative	32.1	81.4	30.6	78.1	31.0	77.2	29.4	75.7	30.2	89.0
TOTAL	66.8	84.9	64.3	85.1	64.6	78.8	61.8	80.6	62.6	83.4
social studies	31.3	85.0	28.2	80.9	31.7	74.7	28.9	65.8	30.6	84.4
English	42.5	76.7	41.3	85.3	41.7	64.5	39.0	59.2	39.2	67.8
math computation	26.3	81.6	26.4	93.2	26.7	86.0	25.1	86.8	25.3	89.1
math problem solving	24.7	86.6	24.2	89.5	24.7	79.3	23.1	77.2	22.6	76.4
math TOTAL	51.0	84.4	50.6	91.9	51.4	84.1	48.3	82.5	47.8	79.5
science	46.0	89.5	43.3	86.5	46.7	72.5	45.0	73.9	44.3	77.4

RMS= raw mean score
S% = State percentile. A percentile score of 72 means that 72 per cent of the schools tested in the State were lower than that of Venice Junior High School in the category.

Parental Data

The investigator interviewed several parents at Venice Junior High School. Their concerns ranged from broad philosophical explorations to feelings about their child's progress in specific subject areas. On the evening of February 23, 1972, the investigator met with a group of parents at Venice High School who were meeting with Mr. Rose to discuss their concerns about the Venice program. The same instrument used [12] with the entire school staff was administered to the parents. Fourteen turned in the questionnaire. The results are displayed in Table VII.

Table VII - Parental Perceptions of the Ten Greatest Problems at Venice Junior High School As Recorded on the Staff Problem Check List (N=14)

	% of Parents Aware of Problem	Problem	Problem Mean
1.	57%	some kids not motivated	2.50
2.	50%	lack of parental/school contacts	3.57
3.	50%	students who can't read at grade level	3.57
4.	42%	pupil boredom	2.83
5.	28%	laxity in student discipline	3.80
6.	28%	fear of retaliation for speaking up to administration	3.40
7.	28%	inadequate curriculum	3.00
8.	28%	lack of good "old-fashioned" teaching	3.40
9.	28%	the student "drug problem"	2.60
10.	28%	resource centers "dumping grounds"	2.20

[12] "Problem Check List for Venice Junior High School," Sarasota County Schools, (February, 1972.) 4 pp. (Mimeographed).

Perspective on the Problems in the Report

Little available data on the problems involved with the implementation of staff differentiation handicapped efforts at focusing on the identification of trouble spots at Venice. With some issues, the experience of the investigator was the only source of data in this regard.

A study of problems with the staff of the Beaverton Public Schools of Beaverton, Oregon, did reveal many similarities however.[13] While the problems mentioned do not indicate severity, or the number of staff who feel they were problems, it is instructive to review those mentioned in the Beaverton Report.

A List of the Dissatisfactions of Teachers
With Staff Differentiation in Beaverton, Oregon

1. exhausted - great pace to keep up
2. some communication problems
3. salary and hours
4. assistants underpaid
5. school schedule does not lend itself to DS
6. making decisions by consensus too slow
7. critical of total system as it is now functioning
8. school was not ready for it
9. must solve staff problems first
10. assistant not utilized in respect to their talents
11. lack of consistency in school policy
12. large classes contribute to discipline cases
13. lack of time
14. some members of team not dedicated
15. much more difficult than self-contained
16. classloads too high
17. assistants must be better prepared
18. students play adults against one another
19. complexity of scheduling
20. not making full use of staff
21. inconsistency of discipline
22. poor management-student behavior
23. poor communication (team, school, district)
24. more hours for assistants needed

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[13]Ralph C. Rands, "A Report on the Results of an Attitudial Survey Conducted in the Differentiated Staffing Project Schools Beaverton Public Schools," Xeroxed. 27 pp. (No date cited).

The investigator had noted the following problems in the development of staff differentiation at Oak Avenue Intermediate School in Temple City, California in 1969. [14]

1. staff fatigue
2. shortages of clerical personnel
3. lowered staff morale at lower hierarchical levels due to status loss
4. loss of general faculty cohesiveness due to departmental specialization
5. creation of staff diviseness due to the Academic Senate
6. role conflicts
7. lack of authority in advanced roles

Many of the problems experienced by the Venice staff are not solely unique to the campus. They are a combination of general problems of secondary schools, and problems accentuated by or caused by the type of differentiation selected to be implemented at Venice. Others are a unique blend of personalities and local eccentricities.

The Sarasota DS effort is nationally recognized, and if it can overcome some of the problems identified in this report, it can succeed where others may have failed. It is the purpose of the second section of this report to provide a future direction in this regard. [15]

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[14] Fenwick English, "Temple City: From Theory to Practice," Florida Education, 46:6, February, 1969, pp. 12-15.

[15] For a good review by two outside writers of the Sarasota Project see, Glenn S. Pate and Carolyn P. Panofsky, "A Study of In-Progress Differentiated Staffing," Graduate School of Education, University of California, Santa Barbara, California, May, 1971. 14 pp. (Xeroxed).

ANALYSES OF PROBLEMS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The second part of this report contains the analyses of the problems at Venice Junior High School with specific recommendations as to how they may be ameliorated.[16]

Problem I: The Lack of Goals/Objectives and Direction

Not one staff member was able to indicate what the specific objectives of FIO were for Venice Junior High School. Teachers usually answered the question as follows:

"To move towards individualized instruction"

"It's supposed to be to take advantage of the aides"

"To make the student more aware of himself"

"To give kids a better education"

"To make the school more flexible"

"To save money on teachers"

One teacher noted that there were no objectives and consequently FIO meant anything that he wanted it to mean. "It's an opportunity to do anything you want," he stated. To some staff members FIO is a hunting license.

The absence of specific and measurable objectives in terms of desired changes in student behaviors which have been validated from a list of goals is probably the most severe problem from a school standpoint. It makes a shambles of any attempt to evaluate the impact of the FIO effort with students, creates problems in defining what it is people are to do in the school (as for example considerable role ambiguity between teachers and teacher aides) and thereby fosters staff conflict, greatly hinders efforts at distributing

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[16] A previous list was published for preliminary staff reaction. See Fenwick English, "A Preliminary Analysis of Problems and Tentative Recommendations for Staff Reaction and Study at Venice Junior High School," Sarasota County Schools. February, 1972, 9 pp. (Mimeographed).

dollars for programs in the school since program priorities cannot be established accept on very arbitrary criteria or rigid equalization formulae. Without such objectives it is impossible to link program alterations to student growth.

Many problems identified by the staff are visual symptoms of the lack of specific program objectives. The notice of the lack of direction, goals, objectives. The lack of real differentiation in job roles, the lack of real instructional individualization, lack of real advancement opportunities, lack of program creativity, problems with teacher aides in role ursurpation, and the fact that the program has not made a visible difference on achievement tests, attitudes, or any other assessment device which was used. While the program may be hard to attack in a specific sense, it is equally as hard to defend. The lack of a concise and lucid list of specific program objectives means that the traditional unidimensional curriculum is still being used. Without knowing where one is supposed to go, how can teacher behaviors be portioned out on the basis of pupil need, how can teaching skills be re-arranged to be more effective, how can the curriculum become diversified in any meaningful or systematic sense?

From this perspective the lack of direction is also a causative agent for pupil boredom since the present narrowness of curriculum is preserved. Teachers have not sensed a need to analyze their own behavior because they have not sensed a need to change it under the program. That is because the program does not at the present time demand any changes at that level.

Typical replies to the question "Cite any changes in your own teaching behavior in the last two years which could be attributed to DS?" were:

"Some of the organization and planning have changed"

"Haven't seen any"

"Trying to get more tolerant of some classroom behavior"

"I have taken a closer look at what I am teaching"

"I am more involved than before"

"I spend more time teaching"

"I moved down to the student's level"

"I am no longer the golden idol in front of kids"

"I've developed a much louder voice"

"We would have made some changes without DS"

"Very little. We tried team teaching once."

"None"

The lack of insight and personal reflection from teachers about real behavioral changes on their part is due to the nebulousness of the changes at the school. Schedules have changed. Students are in large groups. There are study halls. Some kids work on their own. What else is there to change? One need only react to such modifications since they do not require introspection.

When asked for positive changes which have happened to students teachers are equally as vague in their responses. Some were as follows:

"The Directing Teacher is a voice for the department"

"Provisions for pupil self-study"

"None"

"Moving around from teacher to teacher has helped"

"The program is flexible"

"Some children are getting more individualized instruction"

"Some kids feel more comfortable at school"

"Kids are making their own educational decisions"

"Doing a lot more with the below-average student"

"Students can get help when they need it"

"Reaching all but the very low student"

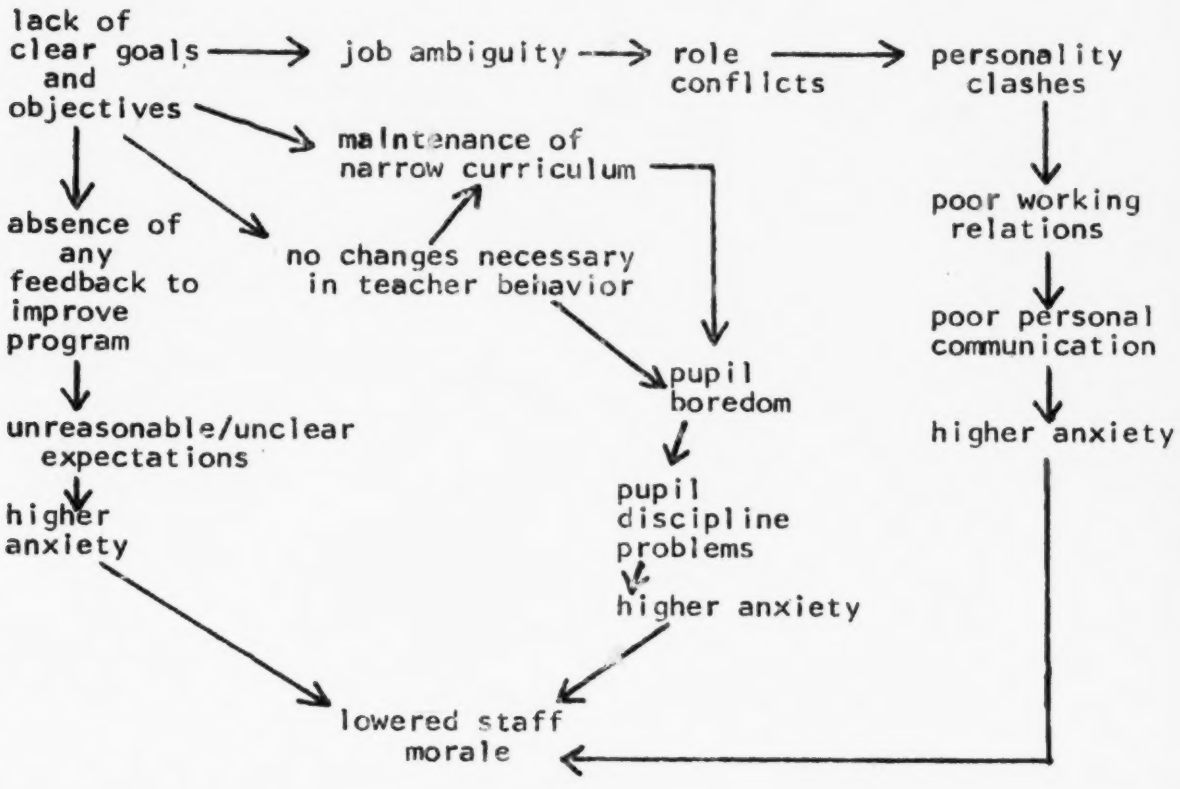
"Use of the resource centers"

"Some students seem to like it better"

Conspicuously absent from positive and negative comments is the lack of specificity about pupil growth, clear language pertaining to a choice of instructional options for teachers and students, and clarity regarding combinations of teaching methods and techniques employed to bring about specific results. A clarity of means can only follow a clarity of ends. Without clear indices of client growth as a target, the staff continues to muddle along with a flexible program in an inflexible curriculum. Teachers act about the same way they did before, except they are more hurried and pressed for time. This is complicated by a lack of materials to stock resource centers, the lack of means by teachers to even create exciting alternatives should they begin to see a larger need for them. In short, what little differentiation exists at Venice Junior High School is owed to organizational needs, and not to needs on the part of students for in-depth differentiated teaching skills based on the fact that students are differentiated and such differentiation must be reflected in sets of explicit differentiated objectives for instruction. This is probably the severest weakness of staff differentiation nationally. It is certainly not peculiar to Venice Junior High School. A kind of cause and effect matrix is shown which indicates the hypothesized interrelationships stemming from the lack of clear goals/objectives and direction.

An Hypothesized Cause/Effect Matrix of Problems Affiliated with the Lack of Explicit Goals and Objectives at Venice Junior High School for FIO

1.



The lack of such goals has multiple/effects and in term leads to other symptoms which provokes still further effects. The most visible effect is lowered faculty morale. It is not always easy to pinpoint why morale is low, but it is assumed that morale has definite anchor points in organizational life. Aside from personal problems which a person brings to a job, there are organizational variables which can raise or lower morale, open or close a climate, or lead to the sense of a challenging or dull job. Many teachers not only in Venice, but at other sites have complained of pressure. Pressure however, has many causes. These are shown in the matrix.

There was much mention of concern for student discipline by teachers and teacher aides. Not all personnel linked such concerns to a narrow curriculum which was rather sterile and produced pupil boredom.

Job ambiguity produced many problems at Venice Junior High School. It was the cause of teacher/teacher aide misunderstanding and friction. In the central office it created a problem in which one role incumbent was apparently advanced to another role of greater status and prestige without a job description or announcement being made. Confusion of function and with it perceptions of status lost or gained led to a morale problem of some magnitude which became known to the professional and paraprofessional staff alike.

Job ambiguity over the role of Instructor and Staff Teacher were mentioned several times. There appears to be little difference in these two roles to teachers. The lack of differences leads to suspicion that the whole program is a farce and that people are being manipulated.

Status deprivation is common in hierarchies.[17] In some hierarchies abnormal time and effort is lost trying to obtain a measure of status. Some conflict between teachers and teacher aides is related to the fact that one group is pushing for role legitimacy and the other group fears the dimunition of their role. Ambiguity of function flames the fears and produces conflict. Tied with the normal personality differences, poor communication in some departments has led to feelings of isolation on the part of some teacher aides.

Paraprofessionals are used differently in some departments. In some areas they are treated with great deference, included in the planning, and in others they are not. One paraprofessional with some responsibility for a resource center was not included in a discussion by teachers of how to use the center more effectively. The person's feelings were a combination of anger and rejection.

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[17]For more detailed information on role conflict see, Victor A. Thompson, Modern Organization (New York: Knopf, 1961) pp. 81-113.

Training for paraprofessionals does not seem as appropriate as training for teachers as to how to use them, as well as basic principles of human relations in working with other people. Paraprofessionals cannot have an identity as long as the professionals do not agree as to how they should be employed. [18]

Discipline at Venice Junior High School does not appear very much different than at typical junior high schools. Teachers aides are far more sensitive to issues of discipline since the responsibilities for performing their jobs demands they be concerned more with order and discipline. Teachers are more concerned with issues of content and instruction and while they were bothered by discipline, (and discipline remains a problem in some departments from a procedural point of view), they are much less worried or bothered by student language or student freedom than paraprofessionals.

The issues of student discipline go far beyond the school. While students felt that the present "strictness" of the school was adequate, they were deeply concerned about "smoking in the restrooms" which they regard as the number one problem at the school. The lack of exciting instructional alternatives for independent study provisions within various programs has led to pupil boredom. These problems have been highlighted as general problems of innovative schools where efforts to develop flexibility to foster diversity exceed the ability of the staff to create viable program alternatives. This has already occurred at Venice Junior High School in the relationship between the resource centers and departmental programs. Aides in the resource centers complained that in some cases the materials that students were utilizing were not tied in with the instructional program. [19]

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[18] This point was validated in a study by John T. Seyfarth and Robert L. Canady, "Paraprofessionals In Search of an Identity," The Clearing House, 45:4, December, 1970, pp. 221-225.

[19] For a review of other problems of innovative schools see James F. McCaffery and Daniel S. Turner, "Discipline in the Innovative School," The Clearing House, 44:8, April, 1970, pp. 491-496.

The most visible sign at a school is the outward behavior of its students. It is most noticable to parents and this often becomes a point of contention.[20] The pointing of fingers of parents towards "permissive schools" and schools of "permissive parents" is a chicken and egg argument.[21] The fact of the matter is that discipline in the schools has undergone drastic changes over a long period of time. Severe beating and expulsion are no longer considered by society or professionals as acceptable alternatives. Whereas before a narrow curriculum was expected to weed out the "undesirables," that same curriculum today must be expanded to keep more children actively interested in learning, since other societal options for dropouts have all but disappeared.[22]

Perhaps the most crippling aspect of the problem is that there has been no feedback data to the staff thus far as to how they were progressing. After the initial plunge there has been the feeling of floundering, not knowing where to go or what problems to become concerned with. The lack of feedback did not permit the staff to know where to go next because they remained perpetually in the dark. Clear notions of performance are necessary for real improvement to occur. It is towards this end that the recommendations follow.

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[20] A recent parent uproar in Tallahassee of a school on staff differentiation was concerned soley with scheduling, not staffing. See "Rickards Parents' Group Hits Flexible Scheduling," Tallahassee Democrat, Wednesday, February 23, 1972.

[21] "Unruly Pupils Blamed on Permissive Policy," Buffalo Evening News, March 6, 1972. p. 13.

[22] For a good historical analysis of changing forms of student discipline see David W. Swift, "Changing Patterns of Pupil Control," The Educational Forum 36:2, January, 1972, pp. 199-208.

Recommendations for Problem 1
Goals/Objectives/Direction

1. The development by the Venice Junior High School administration of a school wide needs assessment model with departmental models as sub-components by June 1, 1972. [23] (With faculty participation).

2. The development of baseline goals for the school by June 1, 1972, in cooperation with the faculty.

3. The development of a baseline set of criterion-referenced objectives which expand the goals into sets of performances indices by September 1, 1972.

4. The development of available pupil data into tables and graphs by June 1, 1972. (affective and cognitive)

5. The development of purchase of pupil data gathering tools by September 1, 1972.

6. The gathering of pupil performance data to match the needs assessment model by November 30, 1972.

7. The completion of the needs assessment model by January 8, 1973.

8. The evaluation of existing programs on the basis of how well they are meeting existing needs. [24]

9. The re-design and re-staffing of the school via a proposal for change to be submitted to the FIO Steering Committee by March 5, 1973, to the Superintendent by April 2, 1973, and to the Board by April 24, 1973.

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[23]For the best example of an actual junior high school needs assessment model see Raymond G. Melton, "Freemont Junior High School Needs Assessment Model," Mesa Public Schools, Mesa, Arizona, 1971. 191 pp. (Mimeographed).

[24]For an example of how this was done with norm-referenced data see Herbert J. Kiesling, "The Relationship of School Inputs to Public School Performance in New York State," The Rand Corporation, Santa Monica, California, October, 1969. 33pp. (Offset).

10. The development by the school administration of a comprehensive management plan to achieve the above by July 1, 1972 with maximum interface (to the greatest degree possible) with the County wide needs assessment effort and with faculty participation and consensus. [25]

Job Ambiguity

11. To solve problems of job ambiguity, the development of job descriptions for all staff by June 1, 1972 into a basic table of organization for the school.

12. To alleviate problems within the central office, the opening of all positions to qualified members of the staff to include the following:
    (a) administrative aide to the principal
    (b) Executive Secretary
    (c) all other secretarial/clerical personnel

13. The development by the administration with all central office personnel of standard operating procedures (SOP) which are available to all office personnel in printed form by June 1, 1972.

14. The development of all job descriptions in performance terms (first draft) by September 1, 1972.

15. The specific development of job descriptions for all instructional and aide positions which relate concretely to pupil need as determined in the needs assessment by June, 1973.

16. The development by each Directing Teacher of printed schedules for the utilization of teacher aides and other assistants which are posted, and which provide for appropriate breaks during the day along with a lunch break by April 1, 1972.

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[25] This should also force a re-examination of the purpose of a junior high school program. See "The Junior High School We Need," ASCD, Washington, D.C., 1961, "Guidelines for Junior High and Middle School Education," by Gordon F. Vars, NASSP, Washington, D.C., 1966, and, "Education in the Junior High School Years; Some Recommendations," by James B. Conant, Educational Testing Service, Princeton, New Jersey, 1960.

17. The training of teachers and teacher aides in a human relations workshop during the Summer of 1972.

Curriculum Rigidity

18. The systematic expansion of "mini-courses" in English, social studies, art and music as appropriate and when needed personnel can be secured.

19. The immediate change in the single "packet method" of teaching mathematics. The diagnosis of all students as to how well they are functioning under the self-pacing instructional mode; the re-grouping of students who function moderately well to not functioning at all under the present arrangement. The re-instatement of small traditional grouping for slow students with textbooks. The development of moderate to large size groups for those students who can function on a semi-packet program within the math complex. The development of a complete management plan including utilization of staff and staff/aide assignments by March 27, 1972. The implementation of the plan by April 1, 1972. A complete evaluation report by teachers and aides to be filed with the principal by July 1, 1972, to include a report of pupil attitudes towards mathematics to be administered in late May or early June of 1972.

20. The development by the English department of sets of discrete skills of English established within a framework of terminal performance objectives from the ninth grade to the seventh grade. The development of elective courses should specify what skills will be mastered at the appropriate levels together with the development of a concomitant reporting procedure to parents by September 1, 1972.

21. The re-examination of the assumptions underlying the current SCORE program which is basically oriented to the acquisition of reading skills, particularly assumptions pertaining to logic of sequence and presentation and its relation to specific language skills, pupil placement, and advancement according to performance. Such re-examination to include the development of preliminary plans for a developmental reading laboratory which is staffed by three additional staffing units to prototype

an advanced form of flexible instructional organization. The plans for such a laboratory to be developed by the Language Arts Department by June 1, 1972 together with a report regarding the efficacy of continuing the present emphasis in English of the SCORE program at Venice Junior High School.[26]

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[26]The SCORE program was accompanied by the Roberts English Series which has not enjoyed wide acceptance in the County and is currently not being used very much at Venice Junior High School. While English skills are taught in the elective classes at Venice and the department is to be commended for their efforts at trying to improve pupil attitudes via this approach, it is not known what peculiar skills in communication, nor of grammar and composition must be mastered. Such standards do not exist with specified tolerance limits of pupil performance at the present time.

The SCORE program does not appear to have empirical validity, though logic supports the interrelationships between reading and language skills. The assumption that every teacher is a teacher of reading is admirable, but with students with severe reading problems requiring the skills of a reading specialist in both diagnosis and prescription, the reading laboratory is more practical in terms of results.

Utilizing the Gates Reading Survey-Form M1, approximately 150 students at Venice Junior High School have been identified by the Language Arts Department as reading at the second to fifth grade levels. This group of students would provide an excellent target population to prototype the developmental reading laboratory. Furthermore, the teachers deployed in such a laboratory could be placed on a system of internal performance contracting by which pupil gain was calculated as one index of their remuneration.

For a good review of the aims of the Venice Junior High School Language Arts Department see Betty Winsett, "Flexible Instructional Organization, Language Arts Department, 1971", Venice Junior High School. 18 pp. (Dittoed).

Pupil Boredom and Discipline

22. To illuminate the problems of pupil boredom and lack of real instructional alternatives for students, the principal should develop an exchange "shadow study" program with another junior high school in Sarasota. At least half of the teaching staff should have finished the shadow study before the Summer. The remainder of the staff should finish the study by November, 1972.[27]

23. The immediate supervision of student restrooms between periods by teachers and other administrative-supervisoral personnel to relieve the smoking in the restrooms. After an initial period such supervision to be placed on a random basis via random scheduling.

24. The formation of a central School Discipline and Security Faculty Committee to involve concerned parents in a study of the following:

    (a) the improvement of school security
    (b) the establishment of uniform disciplinary referral policies and procedures from department to department
    (c) reducing other undesirable or unsafe conditions as it pertains to student control on campus

25. The formation of an anticipatory group-counseling program with school discipline problems on a systematic basis. To be initiated in an exploratory program between April and June, 1972.

26. The development of a referral and follow-up system of records so that teachers who refer students to the Directing Teacher or administration know what happened and how the referral was handled each time.

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[27]The term "shadow study" is taken from a national case study on one day in the eighth grade in which 102 eighth graders in 26 states in 1962 were followed and unobtrusively observed and recorded. The technique was used at the University of Kansas in the early forties. Both Brookside and Sarasota Junior High School were a part of the 1962 study. One of the outcomes of the study was the high percentage of teachers observing pupil boredom from the pupil's perspective rather than from their own. See John H. Lounsbury and Jean V. Marani, "The Junior High School We Saw: One Day in the Eighth Grade," Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Washington, D.C., 1964. 78 pp.

Problem 2: Departmental Specialization/Isolation

The second major problem at Venice Junior High School concerns the type of specialization or differentiation employed at the school. The hyper-extension of roles at the school with the creation of new positions has occurred mainly within the established secondary departments. This is in keeping with most other organizations, i.e., a new division of labor tends to occur along lines which already exist.

The results of such specialization are almost a total disruption of the lateral communication system of the general faculty, the extension of lines of authority and of response, and the increase in communication distortion. In addition, the introduction of the Directing Teacher role has cut lateral communication and is a key to power of that role. New sources of communication have been created while others have diminished. The sum total effect is a definite feeling of loneliness and isolation by teachers within their departments in terms of relating to the total faculty.

From the standpoint of administration, as the separate departments have become introverted, communication problems have increased. Some specialists of organizations aver that "some types of lateral communication are critical for effective system functioning." [28] Indeed, "if there are no problems of task coordination left to a group of peers, the content of their communication can take forms which are irrelevant to or destructive of organizational functioning." [29]

If lateral communication can be controlled in organizations, it can be used as an instrument of punishment. Lateral communication "is a real check on the power of the top leaders." [30] It is with lateral or horizontal communication that the individual teacher is supplied with emotional and social support in the school. The de-

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[28] Daniel Katz and Robert L. Kahn, The Social Psychology of Organizations (New York: John Wiley, 1966) p. 243.

[29] Ibid. p. 244.

[30] Ibid.

partmental model of differentiation has served in some cases to remove him from his colleagues. The competition by the departments for scarce resources has further solidified a vertical communication model. The new status system of the school with the Directing Teacher rank within departments has altered the communication and changed the social and emotional climate.[31] However, it would be foolhardy to throw out the advanced specialization of such roles (assuming they are valid or can be made more valid as specified in the recommendations for a needs assessment by which job tasks can be related to pupil need) and lose the advantages of such specialization. Therefore, some recommendations will be made to increase the lateral communication flow in the organization and restore to the general faculty some power and balance in its dealings with the Faculty Board.

A consequence perhaps not of the type of specialization employed at Venice Junior High School but nonetheless complicitous with the new roles there, has been the administrative arrangement. One Supervising-Principal, Mr. Guy Rose, has had major responsibility for the operation of Venice High School and Venice Junior High School. Mr. Guy Bennett has had the responsibility of curriculum and instruction, while Mr. Robert Bowlin is acting as Interim Principal at the high school. The theory behind the arrangement is simple and straightforward. A differentiation of administrative tasks is both practical and economical as the schools are located so closely together. However, the reality of the cycle of change at the junior high school has made it largely inoperable.

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[31] Almost all organizational specialists agree that communication is never a cause of malfunction, it is a symtom. In the words of Alfred G. Smith in Communication and Status (Eugene: Center for the Advanced Study of Educational Administration, 1966) "There is a general belief that anything which can improve communications will thereby help to solve all the other problems we face. The innocence and simplicity of such a belief are perhaps its only recommendations. It is a belief that cannot weather the tests of experiment or experience. It confuses cause and effect. Cook expressed it well over fifteen years ago when he wrote, 'What is usually meant by effective communication is not the means for achieving harmonious human relations, rather it is the natural consequence of such relations.'" [32]

[32] P. H. Cook, "An Examination of the Notion of Communication in Industry," Occupational Psychology, 25(1951) pp. 707-713.

The dynamics of change mean that a principal must be there in times of high stress and anxiety, and that in order to maintain a modicum of tolerance with such forces, he must have intimate knowledge of what is going on. In times of transition he is not only the prime guiding hand, but the main safety valve for the venting of frustration. That this function is missed by the Venice Junior High School faculty is noted below:

54%	noted the unavailability of the principal
51%	felt the supervising principal was over-extended
40%	felt the leadership was weak from the principal
28%	noted the lack of administrative follow-through

The situation has been further complicated by the fact the Principal, Mr. Rose, has been determined to de-centralize decision making through the Faculty Board which has struggled to make the tough, nitty-gritty decisions. Past history with staff differentiation has shown that decision-making by consensus takes much longer, and the decision-making process is far less visible.

A third explanation is that the individuals involved are not competent administrators. After many long hours of intensive questioning from every aspect of the program, the investigator is convinced not only of the competency but of the integrity and dedication of the administration. The basic philosophy regarding school administrative differentiation for the facilities at Venice remains sound. However, for the next 2-4 years as the problems are ironed out and the high school develops plans and implements flexible instructional organization, on-site administrators will be needed for the transition period. The investigator feels strongly that a change in the present structure is needed immediately to affect the recommendations in the report and to gain valuable time prior to summer training.

The Faculty Board has come in for its share of complaints. The principal grievance by the staff appears to be the procedure for the selection of Directing Teachers. For 37% of the staff, this was the fourth most severe problem at the school. The paradoxical view of the Faculty Board is that some staff members feel it is a "rubber stamp," while others are fearful of its power and secrecy in making school decisions. Such fear has to be based upon the fact that the Board does indeed have power and authority which makes it difficult to explain how it is a "rubber stamp."

The other major criticism of the Faculty Board is that the principal has not actually de-centralized the budget and financial strings to that body. Printed departmental budgets are not available to all teachers as they exhibited frustration and concern about getting their financial requests to the principal.

The representation on the Board is also interesting. Earlier in the year the faculty forced the addition of an "at-Large" representative. However, some personnel with school wide functions do not sit on the Board, even ex-officio, i.e., the school Guidance Counselor.

The lack of general faculty meetings has been a handicap to faculty cohesiveness, but in light of the decisions being made by the Faculty Board, there has appeared to be little reason to call them. This will have to be restored, both in function and authority to strengthen the lateral communication system in the school.

Finally, the administration and staff need to consider the importance of parental involvement in the school. Venice Junior High School does not have a PTA. Perhaps a PTA or a form of that organization is not appropriate. If so, some organized group of parents and professionals should be developed to provide a source of information about parental concerns, other than the one to one feedback now provided to the administration, counselors, or teachers within departments.

The relationships between the aforementioned problems is sketched out in the matrix on the next page stemming from the problem of departmental specialization and isolation.

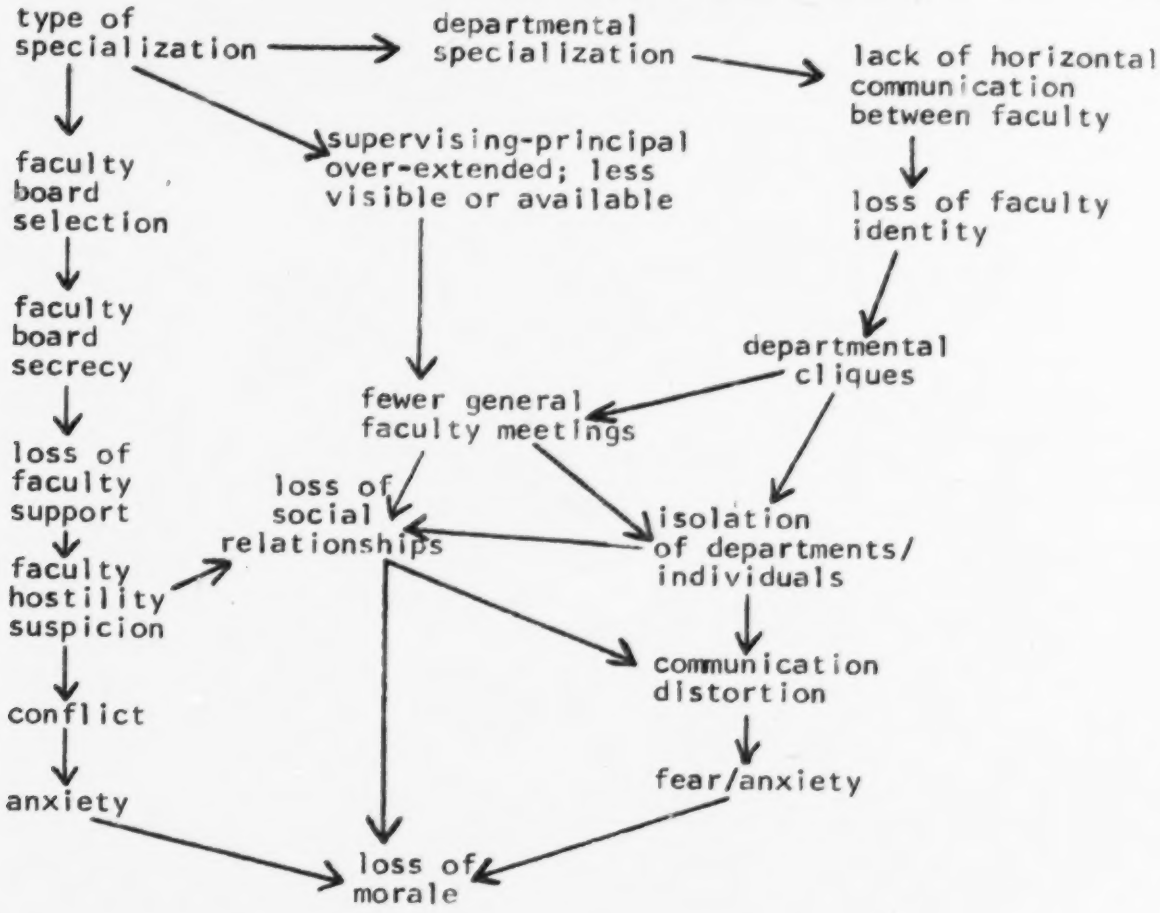
Recommendations for Problem 2
Loss of Lateral Communication in the Faculty

27. The Faculty Board should develop a plan of decentralization of authority and create a check and balance system with the general faculty. Such a plan should be submitted to the general faculty by April 17, 1972, for study and debate. A general and acceptable plan to be implemented by May 1, 1972, with at least one general faculty meeting per month thereafter.

28. The development of a complete system of de-centralized budgeting with school departmental budgets developed and made available to all staff. Furthermore, the administration shall develop concomitant procedures and policies for Faculty Board and general faculty review. Such procedures and policies to be implemented during the developmental budget period prior to the next school year, and not later than September 4, 1972.

An Hypothesized Cause/Effect Matrix
of Problems Affiliated with the Type
of Departmental Specialization and Isolation
Employed at Venice Junior High School

2.



29. The examination of cross-departmental curriculum probes during the summer of 1972 in the development of "mini-courses" based on a thematic approach. The implementation of such probes in the Fall of 1972 not later than the second quarter.

30. The establishment of cross-departmental study groups to examine school wide problems to meet with the principal on a regularly scheduled basis by April 24, 1972. This will:

(a) promote inter-departmental cooperation and cross-fertilization of ideas

(b) provide a principal-staff interface which is almost absent due to other pressures and thus reduce information distortion in the system

(c) re-establish levels of trust between departments and between teachers and the administration which will further reduce information distortion

(d) begin to establish consensus on approach and philosophy on such things as student control and discipline, determining departmental priorities, selection of Directing Teachers, guidelines for the utilization of teacher aides, determining changes in staffing, and day to day feedback .

The Faculty Board

31. The re-consideration of Faculty Board representation to include all school wide office holders at least ex-officio and a Teacher Aide Advocate as a full time member to represent some twenty teacher aides and their concerns. Such changes to be implemented on the same time line as recommendation #27.

32. The development of new procedures for the selection of Directing Teachers and their subsequent retention to include evaluation by subordinates within their departments. Such procedures to be submitted to the Faculty as a whole by the middle of May, 1972, and the FIO Steering Committee by June, 1972.

The Administration Structure

33. That Mr. Guy Rose, currently Supervising Principal of the two secondary schools, be moved with his secretary to the Venice High School facility and be made high school principal, by April 3, 1972. Furthermore, that Mr. Rose be given the following responsibilities:

(a) the development of a comprehensive three year plan for school development at Venice High School to include a school wide needs assessment, curriculum change, staffing flexibility and facility rennovation

(b) the above plan to be submitted to the Superintendent not later than December 1, 1972, to include management analysis and budget recommendations

(c) that Venice High School move towards a complete plan of FIO which will be implemented totally by June, 1975.

34. That Mr. Guy Bennett be named principal of Venice Junior High School by April 3, 1972. Mr. Bennett's immediate job duties to be developed on a two year span and consist of implementing all of the recommendations contained within this report which pertain to Venice Junior High School. Specifically, to execute such duties as will provide the following:

    (a) removal of inter-departmental isolation factors

    (b) to have developed a plan by which directing teachers job descriptions relate to the needs of students and are updated annually

    (c) to have upgraded the math and English departments both in scope, content and methodology

    (d) to have developed a school wide needs assessment by which all programs at Venice Junior High School are annually evaluated and by which teaching functions are assigned

    (e) to have expanded and broadened the current definitions of individualized instruction to include not only pacing, but interest, learning style, etc.

    (f) that the curriculum offerings be expanded by 25% on an elective basis and that shorter mini-courses be offered to revive student interest

    (g) that a developmental reading lab be established

    (h) that a structure for parental involvement at Venice Junior High School be developed and implemented in September of 1972.

    That Mr. Bennett submit to the Superintendent a complete operational plan for the aforementioned two year period by August 1, 1972.

35. That Mr. Bennett's current position be opened to all interested applicants in the County, in April and closed by May 30, 1972, and that such applicants be screened on the following criteria:

(a) past knowledge and experience with flexible staffing

(b) knowledge of curriculum and instructional alternatives

(c) writing and organizational ability

(d) skill in group dynamics and human relations

Problem 3: Lack of Adequate Funding

All of the common sense notions about prototyping an educational innovation have been broken at Venice. It has been generally conceded that during periods of prototyping more expenditure of funds will be necessary, that overstaffing must be used to take up the slack (especially during periods of maximum fatigue) and that "seed money" will have to be spent to insure a fair assessment of the alternative. None of these have occurred at Venice.

Staffing units have been reduced, training investment has been minimal, and other expenditures have simply not occurred. In addition, certain aspects of the total facility picture are so inadequate that the goals of the innovation are not feasible given the presence of all of the other conditions. While increased utilization of the staff from an economical viewpoint could be heightened by scheduling changes, more team teaching, tradeoffs between large and small group instruction, inevitably individualized instruction is more expensive. Alterations in scheduling, more refined use of teacher talents must occur, but no fair comparison can be made of the potential of the model at Venice until it is provided a fair opportunity to fulfill whatever promise it can offer the County.

Recommendations for Problem 3

36. Restoration of all County wide budget cuts at Venice Junior High School for a period of two years to complete prototyping efforts at that site.

37. The acceleration of efforts to relieve the physical education department from conditions which can be described as less than desirable at best.

38. The increase of budget allocation for materials to stock the resource centers by 35% more respectively for two years and the investigation of the possibility of the collapsing of some of the resource centers into larger more economical and contiguous units.

39. The employment of the total staff (aides included) for the next two summers to concentrate upon implementing the major recommendations contained in this report.

EPILOGUE

THE INVESTIGATION IN RETROSPECT

Few words can suffice to summarize the complex panoply of people, goals and emotion at Venice Junior High School. In many ways it is typical, and in just as many it is atypical. Among the staff one finds the high-minded, the thinkers, the reactors, the dedicated, the fence riders and the doubters.

The staff is blessed by a lack of a substantial number of cynics. People do things for as many reasons as there are people. Some staff are oblivous to the grand design, but "pitching" in there every day. Some are totally convinced that the direction selected as as right as a direction could be. Some are lost, and some are being dragged.

Perhaps the word which comes to mind more than once in the days at Venice is courage. The staff and the school ventured into deep water, the unknown. Some have found the adventure exciting, challenging and are sailing with face into the wind. Some are bowed by the strain, dubious and hanging on. The school plunged in. It took a gamble - that something new could result in better education for the children at the school. In some instances the program has found new depth and new purpose. In others the programs are staid, unidimensional and shallow.

Set into this framework of trial was the investigation itself. To some members it was a chance for personal vindication, an opportunity to set the record straight and get down to personalities and other nitty gritty. For almost everyone the results and the feedback resulted in a re-examination of purpose, their own abilities and their accomplishments. For some, particularly Mr. Rose and the leadership team it was a time of trauma, personal scrutiny, and reflection. Long hours were followed by more long hours at the most intense levels imaginable.

Throughout there was an almost unspeakable bond between the investigator and the respondents. The pain, the hopes and the frustrations of many days developed very strong bonds and a renewal of mission. Few could bear the burden objectively. It was a human experience in which tears more than once followed an interchange.

Finally the investigator found in the young faces of the student body the frivolity and metamorphoses of adolescence smiling across the campus. But mixed in with the doubts, the self-effacement, the hostility, and the serious comtemplation of the future, the promise of a better generation, even among the rude, the profane, and the parroting of adult values in our society in all its fluidity. Junior high marks the end of an age of innocence. It is a feeling which runs the gamet of human emotion. For the investigator too, the same sense of loss and gain was borne. He can never be a completely impartial examiner of Venice Junior High School (if indeed such a state is even possible). It is a part of him and to that extent some objectivity has been shed. It is but a small price to pay for the insights gained, and the experiences shared.

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